

**REMARKS**

Claims 1-4, 6 and 7 remain pending. Claims 1 and 7 have been amended.

Claims 1-4, 6 and 7 stand rejected under 35 USC 103(a) by Tavor (US Pub. No. 2001/0032077). Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection.

The present invention set forth in claim 1, as amended, is directed to a product information contrast system that comprises a number of elements in combination. The claimed combination includes a product information management unit, a threshold setting unit, a judgment unit and a display control unit.

The threshold setting unit stores a threshold value provided to determine whether specifications of the product information items of the criterion product indicate any of a newly set property, an omitted property and an out-of-range property when compared with specifications of the product information items of the other products. The judgment unit determines whether the specifications in the product information items of the criterion product are different from specifications in the product information items of at least one of the products managed by the product information management unit, based on the threshold value received from the threshold setting unit. The display control unit generates a visually recognizable alarm display indication of the newly set property, the omitted property, or the out-of-range property in the specifications of the product information items of the criterion product based on results of the determination of the judgment unit.

In addition, the threshold value of the claimed combination, as amended, includes a percentage value inputted into the threshold setting unit by an administrator. Claim 7 has been amended to recite a similar combination of features. Support for these amendments may be found, for example, in FIGS. 2 and 8 (e.g., table 260 stored in alarm information database 26) and on page 25, line 11 to page 26, line 8 in the specification.

A similar combination is neither disclosed nor suggested by Tavor. There is no teaching or suggestion in Tavor of a combination including a threshold setting unit and a display control unit as defined by the amended claims.

The section relied on in Tavor - paragraph [0023] - teaches that the thresholds for product information topics must be defined with natural language words, such as "sweet," "dry," etc. Thus, Tavor fails to disclose or suggest a combination that includes "storing a threshold value for the product information items of the criterion product, said threshold value including a percentage value inputted into the threshold setting unit by an administrator and provided to determine whether specifications of the product information items of the criterion product indicate any of a newly set property, an omitted property, and an out-of-range property when compared with specifications of the product information items of the products", as required by amended claims 1 and 7. The cited sections in Tavor also fail to disclose or suggest a combination including "generating a visually recognizable alarm display indication of the newly set property, the omitted property, or the out-of-range property in the specifications of the product information items of the criterion product based on results of the determination" being made using the threshold value received from the threshold setting unit, as required by amended claim 1 (and similarly recited in amended claim 7).

Further, the claimed percentage value cannot be considered non-functional descriptive material, since it functionally affects the process by which the determination is made on whether specifications in product information items of a criterion product are different from those of other products.

Accordingly, the rejection of claims 1 and 7 should be withdrawn. This logic also disposes of the rejections of claims 2-4 and 6, which depend from claim 1.

In view of the above, each of the presently pending claims in this application is believed to be in immediate condition for allowance. Accordingly, the Examiner is respectfully requested to withdraw the outstanding rejections of the claims and to pass this application to issue.

In the event the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office determines that an extension and/or other relief is required, Applicants petition for any required relief including extensions of time and authorizes the Commissioner to charge the cost of such petitions and/or other fees due in connection with the filing of this document to Deposit Account No. 03-1952 referencing docket no.

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